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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (10 Apr 67) FOR OT

17 April 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Combat After
Action Report, Operation Atlantic City (U)

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TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

Forwarded as inclosure is a Combat After Action Report for Operation Atlantic City. Operation Atlantic City was conducted by the 173d Airborne Brigade during the period 13-22 September 1966. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
APO San Francisco 96250

AVBE-SC

15 December 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

THRU: Commanding General
II FFORCEV
ATTN: G-3 D&T
APO San Francisco 96227

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff
For Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington D. C. 20310

The following report is submitted in accordance with MACV Directive Number 335-

8.

1. General: On 13 September 1966, the 4/503d Inf deployed from Bien Hoa by C-123 aircraft to Dau Tieng to reinforce the 25th ARVN Division elements and provide security for the US and ARVN units in that area. During the small unit patrolling, the contacts reported in Paragraph 13 occurred. This operation, code named "Atlantic City" ended on 22 September 1966.
2. Name of Operation: Operation "Atlantic City"
3. References: Maps Vietnam, 1:50,000 Quan Dau Tieng Sheet 6244 I
4. Type of Operation: Base Defense
5. Date of Operation: 13 September 1966 to 22 September 1966
6. Location: Dau Tieng, Binh Duong Province
7. Command Headquarters: 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)
8. Reporting Officer: Brigadier General Paul F. Smith
9. Task Force Organization:
 - a. TF 4/503d Inf - LTC HEALY, Commanding

4/503d Inf
B/3/319th Arty
Squad Engineer Co
Squad Engineer Co
National Police

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b. TF Brigade Forward - LTC HEALY, Commanding

Bde Fwd CP/CSCC
Sqd (-) MP Platoon
3 Teams, Scout Dog Platoon

10. Supporting Forces:

a. USAF: There were a total of 69 C-123 sorties flown to transport TF 4/503d Inf to and from the AO. No other missions were flown.

b. Army Aviation:

(1) Size of Force:

- (a) Company A, 82d Aviation Battalion
- (b) 173d Aviation Platoon
- (c) 178th Aviation Company (CH-47)
- (d) 161st Aviation Company (VC-2)
- (e) 254th Aviation Company (Helicopter Ambulance)

(2) How and When Employed:

- (a) Aerial Observer 2
- (b) Armed Helicopter 8
- (c) Command and Liaison 22
- (d) Medical Evacuation 10
- (e) Aerial Reconnaissance 4
- (f) Resupply 16
- (g) Miscellaneous 39

TOTAL SORTIES 101

(3) Highlights of Aviation Activities:

(a) On 16 September 1966, aircraft 701 attempting to extract a KIA from the vicinity XT498493 sustained two hits, resulting to excessive fuel leak from fuel cells and possible engine damage. Upon aircraft 701 returning to airfield, aircraft 911 proceeded to the area of contact to extract KIA and WIA,

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while receiving enemy ground fire, the aircraft successfully extracted both casualties without sustaining any hits.

(b) Total hours flown in support operations: 50.4 hours, averaging 5 hours daily.

(c) Total passengers transported by rotary wing aircraft: 95, averaging 9.5 passengers daily.

(d) Total cargo transported by rotary/fixed wing aircraft: 94.2 tons, averaging 9.4 tons daily.

c. Artillery:

(1) Size of Force:

(a) B/3/319th Arty: Six (6) 105mm (towed)

(b) ARVN Arty: Two (2) 105mm and two (2) 155mm guns

(2) How and When Employed:

(a) LZ preparation

(b) H & I fire

(c) Fire missions on VC locations

(3) Results: The 3/319th Arty fired a total of 251 missions expending 1,693 rounds in support of Operation "Atlantic City".

II. Intelligence:

a. Enemy Situation Before Operation: The operational area was believed to contain elements of the 271st and 272d and 273d VC Main Force Regiments of the 9th VC MF Division: two guerrilla companies, the Dau Tieng Company and the Bac Ben Cat company; and one guerrilla platoon, the Chon Thanh Platoon. The 271st Regt in the vicinity of XT543750, the 272d Regt in the vicinity of XT 620440, the 273d Regt in the vicinity of XT550362, the Dau Tieng Guerrilla Company in the vicinity of XT550420, the Bac Ben Cat Guerrilla Company in the Vicinity of XT550420 and the Chon Thanh Guerrilla Platoon in the vicinity of XT 690680. The VC 9th Division Headquarters were believed to be in the vicinity of XT 590910.

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b. Enemy Situation During Operation: Dong Nai Sector reported, on 13 September, that an estimated 150 VC were located at XT928070 at 121835H September and that the VC had moved to vicinity XT928092 at 130500H September. US evaluation of the report was F/6, and no contact was made with referenced VC. Nineteen contacts were made with VC forces, ten of which were VC initiated. The largest VC force contacted was squad size. No documents or overlays of any significance were captured. US aircraft in support of the battalion sized operation received ground fire on one occasion, resulting in no hits.

c. Area of Operation:

(1) Weather Conditions: The climate within the AO was typical of tropic zones affected by monsoons. Winds were gently to moderate, with some strong gusts during rainstorms. Rainfall was normal for the time of year, occurring mainly during the afternoon and evening hours. Visibility was generally poor prior to 1000 hours, due to heavy morning fog. Ceilings were approximately 10,000 feet, lowering to 500 feet during rainstorms.

(2) Terrain: The area in the vicinity of Quan Dau Tieng (XT4946) and Xa Minh Thanh (XT6564), is characterized by relatively little variation of relief, with the exception of the hill formations extending from the vicinity of XT505595 to XT485530 and consisting of Nui Ong with a height of 284 meters; Nus Cua Cong, 195 meters; and Nui Tha La, with an elevation of 198 meters. The northwest slopes of these hills are relatively steep. The battalion conducting the operation operated almost exclusively in the Michelin Rubber Plantation.

12. Concept of Operation: Operation "Atlantic City" was an air movement operation from Bien Hoa Airbase to Dau Tieng and subsequently a security operation of the Dau Tieng Airfield, conducted in four phases:

a. Phase I: Air movement in C-123 aircraft from Bien Hoa Airbase to Dau Tieng.

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b. Phase II: Relief in place of 4/31st Inf (25th Inf Div) vic Dau Tieng upon arrival of 80% combat strength.

c. Phase III: Reinforce ARVN garrison (3/8th Inf) and defend assigned sector of the Dau Tieng Airfield.

d. Phase IV: Conduct day and night patrols/ambushes within the assigned AO.

13. Execution:

D - Day (13 September 1966)

a. At 1000 hours, TF 4/503d Inf initiated movement by C-123 from Bien Hoa Airbase for Dau Tieng. A two hour delay resulted due to bad weather at Dau Tieng. At 1430 hours, TF/4/503d Inf reached 80% combat strength. The 4/503d Inf conducted relief in place of 4/31st Inf and assumed responsibility of Dau Tieng Airfield at 1533 hours. There was no enemy contact during this period of time.

D + 1 (14 September 1966)

b. At 0830 hours, 4/503d Inf headquarters was notified that the Battalion Commander, LTC Healy was admitted to the 93d Surgical Hospital. The Battalion Executive Officer, MAJ Spinks assumed command (acting). At 0845 hours, Companies A and D initiated patrols north of Dau Tieng in assigned AO. Company A returned to base camp at 1050 hours and reported negative contact. Company D located a road block at GC 500485, consisting of fallen trees, wire and two mines. An unsuccessful attempt was made to remove the road block. At 1110 hours, Company D arrived at hamlet AP 6 Ris, GC 512485. Company D reported that there were 21 punji pits 200 meters of the hamlet. The pits were 2 feet wide and 3 to 5 feet deep running north to south. Co D destroyed a cement and steel girder tower capable of being used to overlook the Dau Tieng Airfield at 1325 hours, and initiated movement for village AP 6 Chanh (1). At

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1415 hours, Company D lead element received fire from GC 519459; lead element returned fire and spotted two (2) VC moving north. Questioning a young boy revealed that possibly eight (8) VC were in the area. Lead element continued pursuit of the VC to the north, maintaining contact for 1000 meters. Company D spotted a total of five (5) VC during this contact. VC broke contact at 1438 hours and at 1450 hours, Company D regained contact at GC 529504. VC continued firing several rounds and moving northwest remaining 200 to 300 meters from Company D. Company D broke contact at 1551 hours at GC 529507. Results of Action: Friendly Forces: 1 WIA. Enemy Forces: 2 Possible WIA. Company D returned to Battalion base camp at 1808 hours. Co C established a platoon ambush site at GC 497481 at 1918 hours. The 7th Air Force flew 11 C-123 sorties from Bien Hoa to Dau Tieng bringing the Battalion strength to 95%.

D + 2 (15 September 1966)

c. At 0815 hours, Companies B and C departed battalion base camp to patrol in assigned AO. At 1100 hours, Company C made contact with an estimated VC squad, armed with small arms weapons, two automatic weapons and possibly one 57mm recoilless rifle (57mm RR was later believed to be an M-79). The VC were wearing green Popular Forces uniforms. VC broke contact at 1110 hours and moved north. Results: Friendly: 1 KIA, 1 WIA. Enemy: Unknown. At 1430 hours, 4/503d Inf completed Bien Hoa to Dau Tieng airlift by C-123's using 43 sorties. Two platoon size ambush sites were established at GC 495479 and 509492. At 1536 hours, Co B and C (-) closed into battalion base camp. At 2110 hours, Company A received two (2) rounds of small arms fire on perimeter, vicinity of a .50 cal MG position. At 2202 hours, Company A received one (1) round of small arms fire at the same location.

D + 3 (16 September 1966)

d. At 0745 hours, Companies A and D initiated patrolling north in assigned AO. At 0836 hours, Company D received sniper fire from two (2) VC at

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GC 502493. Company D returned fire and the VC fled southeast. Co D pursued and received fire from VC at GC 499492. Results: Friendly: 1 WIA. Enemy: 1 possible KIA. A detached UH-1B (being used as a Dustoff ship) was sent in for extraction and upon approaching LZ was fired on from vicinity GC 502504 by automatic fire. The helicopter took five (5) hits and returned to Dau Tieng Airfield. At 0934 hours, Company D engage one squad of VC at GC 495493. VC detonated one claymore mine with negative results. At 0950 hours, Company D, maintaining contact with 5 to 10 VC, moved east to GC 503492. Results: Friendly: 2 WIA. Enemy: 2 possible KIA. At 1038 hours, Company D was ordered to establish a blocking position and Company A to sweep north from GC 515505. No casualties taken. At 1225 hours, Company D spotted three (3) VC to the southwest at GC 510502. At 1230 hours, Company D spotted eight (8) VC moving east to west as Company A began to close. Company D fired automatic fire and reported seeing two (2) VC fall. At 1300 hours, Company A received small arms fire from GC 520-489. Results: Friendly: 1 KIA, 1 WIA. Enemy: 2 possible KIA's. The VC broke contact and headed northeast. At 1330 hours, Companies A and D linked up at GC 517503. At 1615 hours, Company A checked a hospital located in Hamlet AP 6 vicinity GC 513484, and found seven (7) M-79 rounds. At 1745 hours, Companies A and D closed into the battalion base camp. At 2309 hours, a plantation supervisor reported that VC contacted today were elements of C-64. He further stated that when contact was broken, the VC moved north to Hamlet AP 6 Chanh (2) and stole a truck belonging to the Michelin Plantation.

D + 4 (17 September 1966)

e. At 0930 hours, Company B and Company C initiated patrolling action north in AO. At 0938 hours, Company D initiated a motorized patrol in the AO. At 1140 hours, Company C received two rounds of sniper fire from GC 511491. No casualties. VC broke contact immediately. At 1303 hours, Company B received.

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small arms fire vic GC 529497, with negative casualties. At 1305 hours, Company D spotted two (2) VC at GC 504504, when Company D began to deploy. Heavy fire was received from the west. Company D spotted four (4) VC in black pajamas who broke contact moving west. Results: Friendly: 1 WIA. Enemy: Unknown. At 1355 hours, Company C took four (4) VC under fire at GC 508504. The VC fled north leaving one (1) DM-10 claymore mine. Results: No friendly casualties. Enemy: 1 possible KIA. At 1515 hours, Company D closed back to the battalion base camp. Company B remained in the AO setting up ambush sites at GC 508515 and 503514. At 1830 hours, Company B located six (6) uniforms, one (1) mosquito net, one (1) US poncho, one (1) small truncated cone shaped charge and 13 documents at GC 507513.

D + 5 (18 September 1966)

f. At 0300 hours, Company B moved to Hamlet AP 6 Chanh (2) at GC 520-515, encircling the hamlet, and at 0800 hours conducted search of the hamlet. At 0736 hours, Company A departed the battalion base camp to patrol north in AO. At 0937 hours, Company B completed search of hamlet with negative results and moved south to search of Hamlet and hospital (GC 520595, AP Chanh (1)). At 1059 hours, Companies A and B linked up surrounding hamlet with the intent to search out the VC. Negative results. At 1355 hours, Companies A and B closed back to battalion base camp area. No contact during this period of time.

D + 6 (19 September 1966)

g. At 0830 hours, Companies C and D and one platoon from Company B departed the battalion base camp to conduct squad saturation of AO. At 1023 hours, Company D received small arms fire at GC 507505. Two (2) VC were lying in ambush and fired several rounds and then fled northwest. Results: Friendly: 1 WIA. At 1117 hours, Company D engaged five (5) VC with weapons at GC 507504. Results: 1 possible VC KIA. The VC fled to the northeast. At 1140 hours,

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Company C engaged two (2) VC at GC 517486. Results: 1 VC KIA (BC), one VC fled west. Equipment taken from KIA includes: 1 pistol belt, 2 carbine magazines, 1 frag grenade and 1 hammock. At 1315 hours, Company C located an area 20 meters and 100 meters in length of punji stakes running north to south at GC 532482. At 1510 hours, Company C fired on one (1) VC at GC 503493. The VC fled south. At 1640 hours, a platoon from Company B returned to the battalion base camp with negative contact. At 1910 hours, B/3/319th Artillery received two (2) rounds of small arms fire. No casualties. Companies in the AO continued area saturation and maintained ambush sites throughout the night, with negative contact.

D + 7 (20 September 1966)

h. The 4/503d Infantry continued area saturation. At 0808 hours, one platoon from Company A departed the battalion base camp to conduct patrols in the northwest portion of the AO. At 0925 hours, Company C spotted five VCS heading west at GC 524486. Elements moved to blocking positions but could not make contact. At 0930 hours, Company D engaged seven (7) VC wearing khaki uniforms. One individual had a helmet and each individual had a rifle. When taken under fire, the VC fled to the north. At 1720 hours, a plantation manager reported that during the fight that took place on 16 September, the VC had six (6) KIA's and two (2) WIA's. The KIA's were taken to Ben Cui to be buried. Action was taken to confirm this report going through ARVN channels. At 1810 hours, a platoon from Company A returned to the battalion base camp with negative contact. Companies in the AO continued saturation and established ambush sites throughout the night with negative contact.

D + 8 (21 September 1966)

i. At 1000 hours, Companies C and D consolidated at company bases and initiated movement back to the battalion base camp. At 1100 hours, Company D spotted one VC moving east to west at GC 501501. The VC was engaged by M-79 fire

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with negative results. Company C closed back to the battalion base camp at 1112 hours, and Company D closed back to the battalion base camp at 1230 hours. No further contact was made during this period of time. The 4/503d Infantry prepared for airlift back to Bien Hoa base camp.

D + 9 (22 September 1966)

j. At 1715 hours, the 4/503d Infantry began airlift by C-123 aircraft from Dau Tieng to Bien Hoa, closing at Bien Hoa base camp at 1440 hours. A total of thirty-two (32) C-123 sorties and two (2) CV-2 sorties were used to return the battalion.

10. Administrative/Logistical Matters:

The 4/503d Infantry's support platoon, under the control of their S-4, was deployed utilizing five 3/4 ton trucks, two pulling water trailers and the remainder pulling cargo trailers. Three trucks and one cargo trailer were used to transport the battalion mess section.

Expendable supplies and back-up ammunition were kept to a minimum due to the ready availability of needed supplies. This was accomplished by approximately three (3) CV-2 sorties flown in from base camp each day. Communication was maintained between base camp and the forward area with an attached UHF van.

No significant problems were encountered during the operation.

15. Civic Action/Psychological Operations: None

16. Special Equipment: Scout Dogs were utilized on patrols conducted in the AO with outstanding results. On at least three known occasions the scout dogs alerted the patrols of the VC presence in the area. This fact was verified by subsequent contact with VC elements. It was noted however that dogs tire and are not effective after approximately 15 hours of constant use.

17. Results of Operation Atlantic City are as Follows:

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a. **Friendly Losses: (Personnel)**

b. **Enemy Losses: (Personnel)**

c. Enemy Losses: (Equipment)

(1)	DH-10 Claymore Mine (Chicon)	.....	1
(2)	Small Truncated Cone-Shaped Charge	.....	1
(3)	30 Cal US Carbine (Rounds)	.....	40
(4)	Carbine Magazines	.....	2
(5)	Hand Grenades (Frag US)	.....	2
(6)	Pistol Belt (US)	.....	1
(7)	M-79 Rounds (US)	.....	7
(8)	Documents	.....	13

18. Commanders Analysis and Lessons Learned:

a. Commander's Analysis

Introduction of the 4/503d Infantry into the Dau Tieng area provided security for the airstrip and its immediate environs. Extensive use of platoon sized patrols and the positioning of reinforced squads throughout the AO, denied the VC control of the rubber plantation workers and local populace. Contact was light and sporadic, consisting primarily of sniper fire. One male VC suspect was captured who, it developed, was not a VC. With the departure of US Forces, however, the VC will continue to operate in the area.

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b. Lessons Learned:

Item: Company Radios (PRC/25) on Same Frequency

Discussion: During a fire fight, the control problems of the rifle company commander and the rifle platoon leader are compounded by the necessary requirement of having twelve to fourteen of the company PRC-25 radios on the same frequency. Not only does the company commander have difficulty keeping his net open, but also, the situation normally requires that the platoon leaders use voice to control their squads. This causes the platoon leader to continually expose himself.

Observation: That the development of a light, compact squad radio be expedited.

Item: The Checkerboard Concept of Squad Saturation Patrolling

Discussion:

(1) Subdivision of Area: The area used for the checkerboard system was a portion of the Michelin Rubber Plantation (approximately 5 km north to south and 3 km east to west). In order to simultaneously employ two rifle companies, this area was divided in half and each half in turn subdivided into sectors each approximately 1000 meters square (the roads along the rubber trees generally provided easily identifiable terrain features). (See Inclosure I, Area Sketch)

(2) Composition of Force Employed:

(a) Into each 1000 meter square a reinforced squad of eleven to fourteen men was employed.

(b) Each squad was augmented with at least one LMG (M60) and one PRC-25 radio. To the extent possible each squad was also armed with one starlight scope and their normal prescribed ammunition load. Also, where possible and of importance, a medic was attached to each squad.

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(c) Scout dog teams were employed to the extent possible with excellent results. (See paragraph 16, "Atlantic City" After Action Report).

(3) Control:

(a) The two rifle companies employed simultaneously experienced no real difficulty in control. Contributing factors were that navigation in the rubber plantation was relatively easy (this allowed the squad leader to better pin-point his location), and that each squad had a PRC-25 radio.

(b) Artillery and mortar fire was employed on the perimeter sectors with no difficulty.

(c) It is important to note that the company bases (used to control the squads) should be constantly moved and the force within the base should vary daily so as to confuse the VC as much as possible.

(4) Method of Operation:

(a) Squads moved into their AO's during daylight hours and alternated between carefully searching an area and laying in ambush. A squad would move approximately 500 meters, establish an ambush position, with all around security and wait and listen for approximately one hour. The procedure is then repeated. Night ambush sites were selected prior to darkness, however they were not occupied until just prior to EENT.

(b) Squad locations were continuously posted at the Battalion TOC on a master control map to insure that no two squads engaged one another.

(c) Minimum limitation was placed on the utilization of mortar and artillery fire.

(5) Results: Squad saturation of the particular area resulted in one (1) VC KIA (BC) and one (1) VC KIA (poss).

(6) Advantages:

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(a) A much wider and extensive coverage of particular area is effected.

(b) A squad size force has the speed, firepower and reaction capability necessary to "stay with" and destroy a small size VC force.

(c) The development of both the squad leader and his squad as a "fighting team" are enhanced.

(d) Squads become thoroughly familiar with the area of operation.

(e) Mutual support is effected by having several squads operating simultaneously in areas adjacent to one another. For example, a squad in one AO can quickly establish a blocking position or hasty ambush after the squad in the adjacent AO has made contact and is driving a VC element in its direction.

(f) The more frequently we conduct this operation, squads will improve in land navigation, ambush and patrolling techniques, and artillery adjustment. Eventually, we should be able to operate this concept successfully in dense jungle areas against larger VC elements. Therefore, as was done, we should limit these operations initially to relatively open areas where there are no large size elements, but as the squads gain experience, they should not be limited by terrain or enemy strength.

Observation: The checkerboard concept of using squad saturation patrols is highly recommended in relative open areas which contain no known large size VC forces.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



E. B. ROBERSON
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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FOR THE COMMANDER:

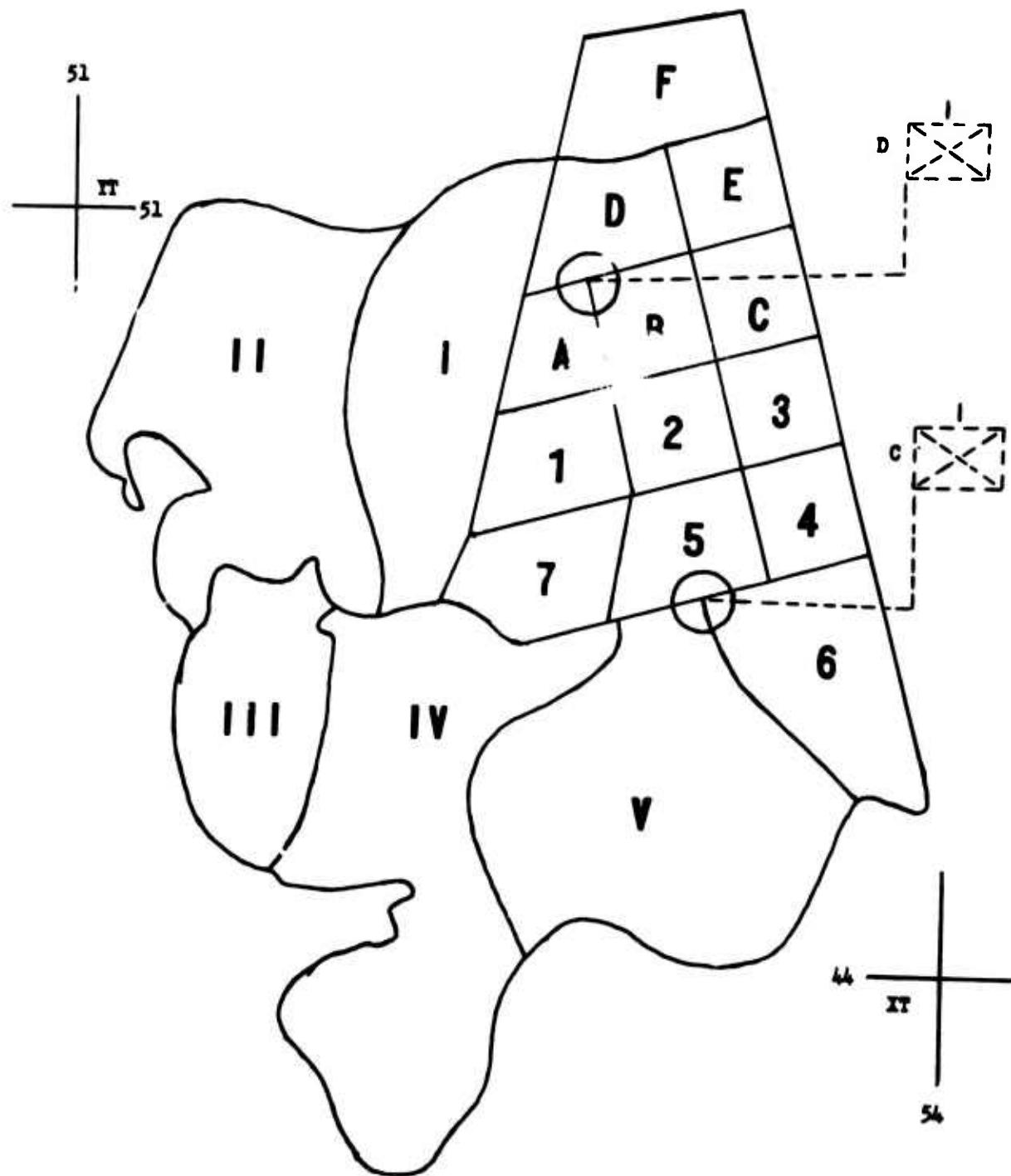


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Inclosure #1 (Area Sketch) to After Action Report to OPORD 18-66
(OPERATION ATLANTIC CITY) Security Operation

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"ATLANTIC CITY"

ANNEX A - Operations Overlay - 12 September 1966

ANNEX B - Current Intelligence Overlay

ANNEX C - Operations Overlay - 16 September 1966

ANNEX D - Operations Overlay - 17 September 1966

ANNEX E to FRAG ORDER 1 - Operations Overlay - 18 September 1966

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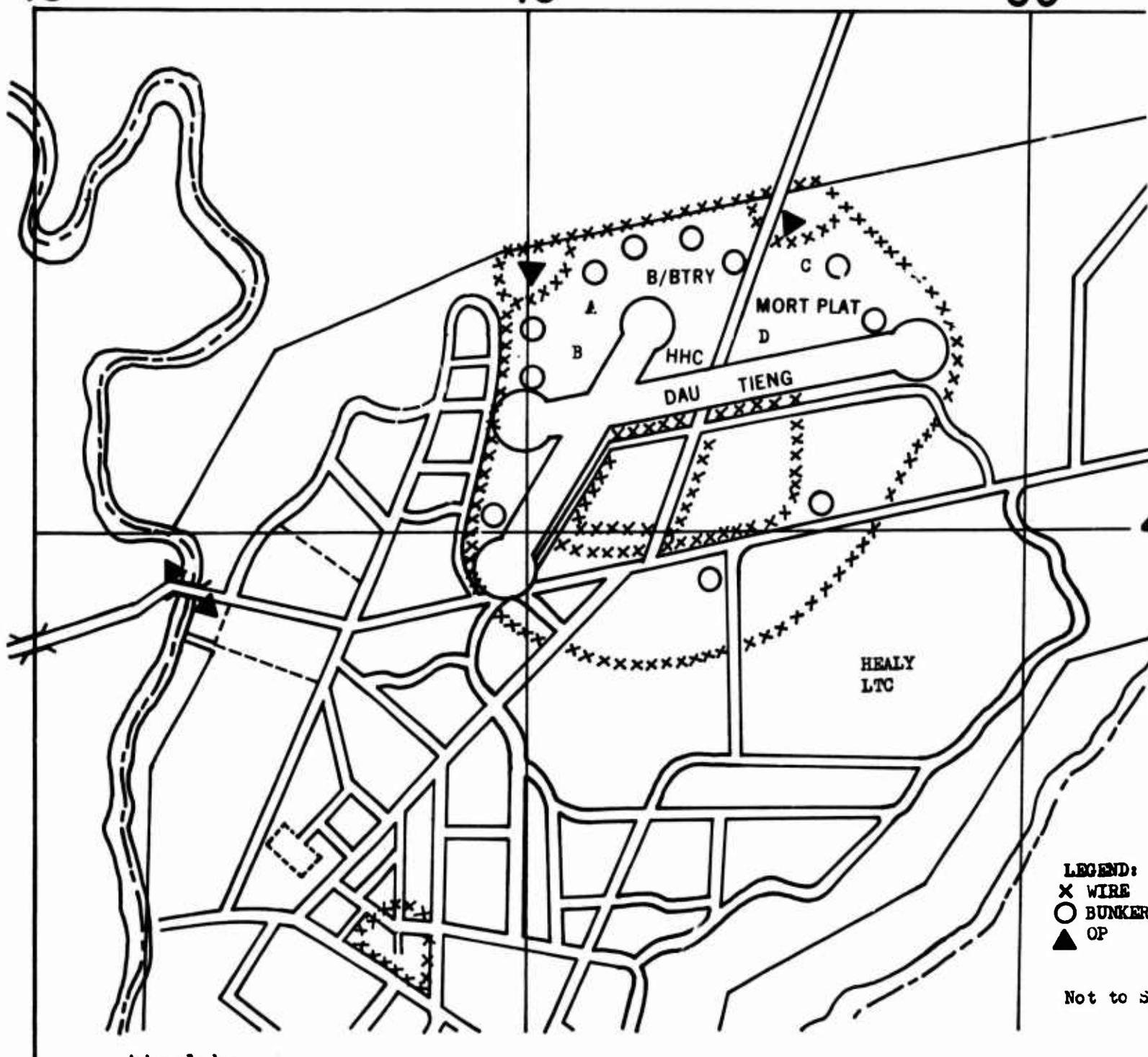
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Acknowledge

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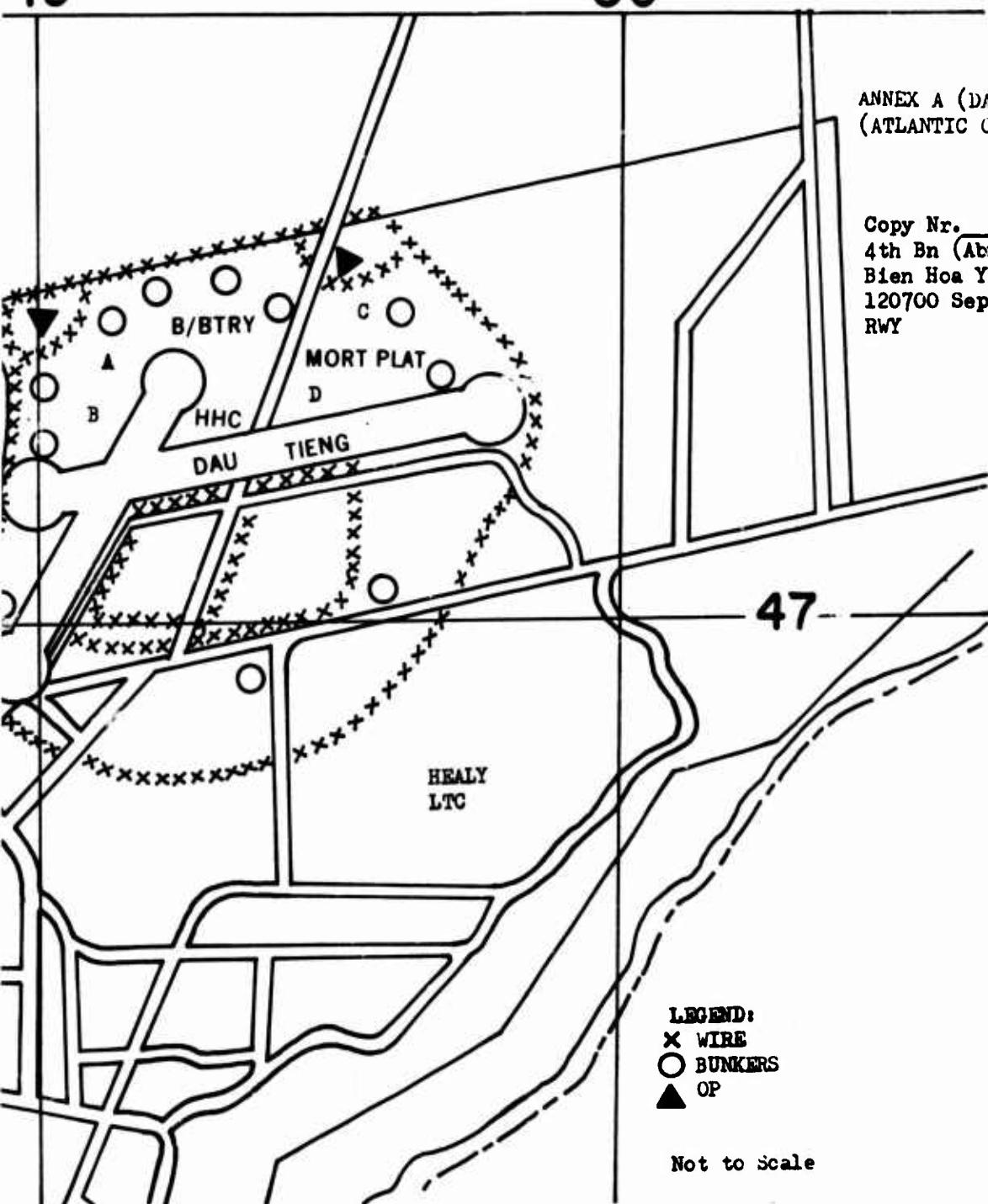
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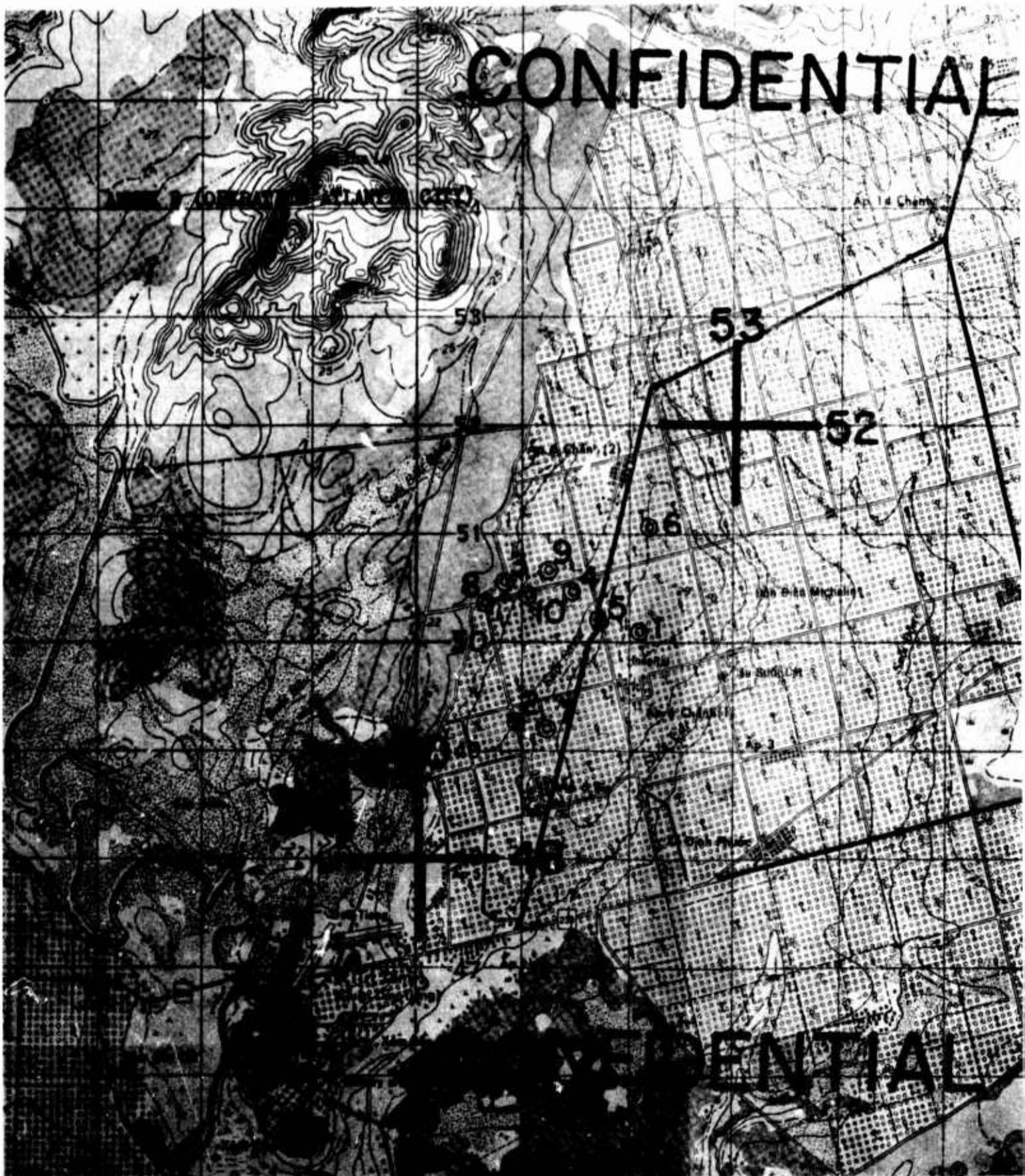


ANNEX A (DAU TIENG SCHEMATIC) to OPORD 8-66
(ATLANTIC CITY) (U)

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4th Bn (Abn), 503d Inf.
Bien Hoa YT 021122 RVN
120700 Sep 66
RWY

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Dan Tieng (IT 494472) RVN
181600H Sep 66
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ANNEX E

PRAG ORDER 1 to OPORD 8-66 (OPERATION ATLANTIC CITY)(U)

TASK ORGANIZATION

A/4/503

Arty PO Party

B/4/503

Arty PO Party
Engr Demo Tm

C/4/503

Arty PO Party
Engr Demo Tm
1 Interpreter
1 MP
2 Scout Dog Tms

D/4/503

Arty PO Party

Engr Demo Tm (OAI LINH TAY NINH)

1 Interpreter

1 MP

2 Scout Dog Tms

TINH BINH TAY NINH
TINH BINH DUONG

TRI TAM

Huu Gia

Bau Me



